

in circulation at the end of March, 1997 are as under :

Denomination	Currency notes (in million pieces)	Coins
Re. 1	3201	8960
Rs. 2	2765	1444
Rs. 5	3480	963
Rs. 10	10056	—
Rs. 20	378	—
Rs. 50	7122	—
Rs. 100	6081	—
Rs. 500	495	—

(b) The Reserve Bank of India monitors the position of currency notes and coins in different denominations.

(c) There is a general shortage of currency notes and coins of various denominations due to the limited production of note printing presses and mints.

(d) The note printing presses at Dewas and Nasik are being modernised to augment their capacity. The Reserve Bank of India has set up its own note printing presses at Mysore (Karnataka) and Salbani (West Bengal). With the modernisation of the Government presses at Nasik and Dewas and full capacity production at the RBI presses at Mysore and Salbani by the year 1998-99, the supply position of notes will improve considerably. Reserve Bank of India is also, as a one-time measure, getting currency notes (Rs. 100-2000 million pieces and Rs. 500-1600 million pieces) printed abroad to meet the demand-supply gap till the year 2000. Government mints at Calcutta, Hyderabad and Mumbai are being modernised. The supply position of coins will improve after modernisation by March, 1998. Government has decided to import coins (Re. 1 - 700 million pieces and Rs. 2- 300 million pieces) to improve supply position.

Indians in Kuwait and Iraq Jails

*450. SHRI E. AHAMED : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) the number of Indians in jails of Kuwait and Iraq as a result of Gulf war between them;

(b) the details of charges against these Indians; and

(c) the steps taken or proposed to be taken by Government to get these Indians released?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI RAMAKANT D. KHALAP) : (a) Nil.

(b) and (c) Do not arise.

Right to Information

*452. SHRI G.A. CHARAN REDDY : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state:

(a) whether the working group constituted by the Government to study the issues connected with the right to information and promoting open and transparent Government, has submitted its report to the Government;

(b) if so, the main recommendations thereof;

(c) the number of recommendations accepted by the Government;

(d) the steps being taken to implement these recommendations;

(e) whether the Chairperson of the Press Council has also drafted a Bill for right to information and whether the draft has been sent to the Government; and

(f) if so, the action taken or proposed to be taken thereon?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PERSONNEL, PUBLIC GRIEVANCES AND PENSIONS AND MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PARLIAMENTARY AFFAIRS (SHRI S.R. BALASUBRAMONYAN) : (a) No, sir.

(b) to (d) Do not arise, in view of (a) above.

(e) and (f) A draft Bill on Right to Information received from the Chairperson of the Press Council was made available to the Working Group on Right to Information for consideration during its deliberations.

Violation of Customs Rules

*453. SHRI MANIKRAO HODLYA GAVIT : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) the number of foreigners arrested in India during the last two years and upto March, 1997 for violating customs rules and smuggling;

(b) the names of the countries to which these foreigners belonged;

(c) the corresponding figures for the years 1994 and 1995; and

(d) the details of the preventive measures taken by the Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBARAM) : (a) to (d) 372 foreigners were arrested in India during the last two years and upto March, 1997 for violating Customs Rules including smuggling. 196 & 168 foreigners were arrested in the year 1994 & 1995 respectively for similar violations.

The arrested foreigners belong to various countries including Afghanistan, Australia, Austria, Bangladesh, Canada, Denmark, Ethiopia, Gambia, Ghana, Germany, Greece, Holland, Iran, Jordan, Kenya, Myanmar, Malaysia,

Italy, Nepal, Nigeria, Netherlands, Pakistan, Poland, Philippines, Russia, Saudi Arabia, Syria, Spain, Singapore, Sri Lanka, Somalia, Switzerland, Turkey, Tanzania, Thailand, Turkmenistan, U.K., U.S.A., Uganda, Vietnam and Yemen.

Intelligence agencies and field formations of Customs are alert to detect and prevent smuggling of goods and violations of Customs Act. Strict vigil is being maintained at all International Airports/ports and sensitive areas of the borders to prevent smuggling and apprehend the offenders including foreigners. Specific measures taken include surveillance and use of sophisticated equipments like metal detectors, colour baggage X-Ray machines at Airports/ports and Land Customs Stations. A number of vehicles have been provided for anti smuggling operations throughout the country. Further, two helicopters have been positioned since July, 1996 in the West Coast for Anti-smuggling work cum surveillances. Training is being imparted to the officers to improve their skills and abilities.

All cases of smuggling and violations of Customs Act/ Rules which are detected are followed up by proper and timely investigation adjudication, and prosecution against all accused including foreign nationals.

[Translation]

Decline in National Savings

*454. SHRI JAGATVIR SINGH DRONA : Will the Minister of FINANCE be pleased to state :

(a) whether various savings schemes launched by the Government have received a serious set back due to high interest rates offered by Private Companies and financial institutions;

(b) whether a decline of 11 percent in National Savings Schemes has been registered alone during the current year in comparison to last year;

(c) whether Government rates in all deposit schemes are half to one and a half percent lower than the rates offered by the Private Companies and institutions; and

(d) if so, the steps taken or proposed to be taken by the Government to remedy the situation?

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE (SHRI P. CHIDAMBRAM) : (a) and (b) No Sir. The gross collections in the various small savings Schemes launched by the Government of India show an increasing trend over the years. The actual figures for 1996-97 are not yet available.

(c) The Small Savings Schemes launched by Government of India are not comparable with the Schemes offered by Private Companies/Institutions. Each saving instrument is designed to cater to different requirements of small savers.

(d) Does not arise.

[English]

Organisation of Islamic Countries

*455. KUMARI SUSHILA TIRIYA : Will the PRIME MINISTER be pleased to state :

(a) whether it is a fact that organisation of Islamic countries at its meeting held on March 24, 1997 have agreed to support Pakistan on its Kashmir Policies and in liberating Kashmir from India;

(b) if so, the details thereof; and

(c) the name of countries who attended the meetings and signed the declaration?

THE MINISTER OF STATE OF THE MINISTRY OF LAW AND JUSTICE (SHRI RAMAKANT D. KHALAP) : (a) and (b) The OIC at a Special Summit in Islamabad on March 23, 1997 adopted a Special Declaration on Jammu & Kashmir. This document makes observations about J & K and calls for action which echoes Pakistan's well-known views on the issue.

(c) The meeting was attended by OIC countries, whose names are given in the attached Statement.

Statement

1. Jordan
2. Azerbaijan
3. Afghanistan (seat vacant)
4. Albania
5. United Arab Emirates
6. Indonesia
7. Uganda
8. Iran
9. Pakistan
10. Bahrain
11. Brunei Darussalam
12. Burkina Faso
13. Bangladesh
14. Benin
15. Turkey
16. Chad
17. Tunisia
18. Gabon
19. Gambia
20. Algeria
21. Comoros
22. Djibouti
23. Saudi Arabia